

HIST 349: Reading Guide – *The Cheese and the Worms*

1. What impact did printing have on oral culture and traditions? How does Menocchio “read”?
2. What do Menocchio’s beliefs tell us about the culture and beliefs of North Italian peasants in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century? Can we extrapolate from his beliefs for his whole society or are Menocchio’s views unique, giving us no indication of what other peasants believed?
3. Why does Menocchio persist in his beliefs even after he understands the consequences of this stubbornness? Is Ginzburg convincing in his explanations?
4. How does the Inquisition deal with Menocchio? Why do they deal with him so leniently? What do his trials reveal about justice and judicial procedure in inquisitorial courts?
5. How are oral traditions and beliefs maintained in rural communities? How are they changed over time and by outside influences?
6. What impact did the Reformation have on traditional beliefs such as those espoused by Menocchio?